

Draft Environmental Review of Fish Introduction

Description of water body and action:

Name: Dry Blood Reservoir County: Petroleum
Legal Description: T17NR26E Sections 14/15
Lat/Long: 47.22847°; 108.337737°
Water Code: 18-7565

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks proposes to stock black and white crappie in a reconstructed reservoir north of Winnett on Dry Blood Creek. This reservoir is on BLM land and has legal public access. Historically it was about 10 surface acres with a maximum depth of 19ft. It has consistently leaked in recent years. It has supported a largemouth bass fishery for many years with occasional winterkill. In 2008/2009 the dam was rebuilt with higher fill so winter kill events may be less frequent.

Name of the drainage where the pond is located: Located on intermittent Dry Blood Creek which flows into Blood Creek. This reservoir is about 36 river miles from the Musselshell River.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Black and white crappie

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes in the Musselshell Drainage.

Species of Special Concern in the drainage:

No Species of Special Concern are known Blood Creek which is ephemeral or intermittent. The Musselshell has a small sauger population and historical records of blue sucker and burbot.

Risks:

Inlets to or outlets from the pond? Yes ☒ No ☐ **Explain:**

Pond is located on-stream. There is potential for fish to swim up-stream or be swept downstream during high flow event.

Potential for impacts on the genetic structure of existing fish populations:

☐ None ☒ Minor ☐ Major

During high water stocked fish could go over the spill-way and into Blood Creek and the Musselshell River. It is unlikely there would be genetic impacts on any existing fish population.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation:

☐ None ☒ Minor ☐ Major

Stocked crappie will eat small fish (minnows) in the pond and may eat or compete with largemouth bass. It is unlikely that crappie would colonize intermittent Blood Creek or the Musselshell River; they prefer lakes, reservoirs, and slow portions of streams with sandy or muck bottoms and clear water. It is unlikely there would be effects at the population level.

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction: ___None
___X Minor ___Major

Some tiger salamanders may be consumed and aquatic invertebrates will be consumed. It is unlikely there would be effects at the population level.

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location: ___None ___X Minor
___Major

It is likely that white and black crappie will reproduce in this pond. This would be considered a desirable or beneficial impact.

If necessary would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked?

Yes, the pond is small enough to chemically treat and it could probably be drained sufficiently to allow winter kill to occur.

Would this introduction result in impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable?

No.

Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action).

No action. There would not be a new opportunity for public fishing for crappie in Petroleum County. Several anglers have asked for more crappie fishing in R4.

Describe and evaluate mitigation, stipulations or other control measures enforceable by the agency, if any.

Fish stocking will be a beneficial action.

List all agencies and individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction.

Area anglers, Bureau of Land Management

List all agencies and individuals who have been notified of this proposed introduction.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, R4 staff
Bureau of Land Management

Based on this evaluation, is an EIS required YES/NO? If no explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed actions. No. The proposed action is expected to produce minor impacts to the human environment that are judged to be beneficial in nature. The draft EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

EA prepared by: Anne Tews, Fisheries Biologist

Date: March 23, 2011

Comment period: Comments will be accepted at any time regarding the planting program in Dry Blood Reservoir. The proposed action is expected to be non-controversial. If no comments are received by May 31, 2011 we propose to issue a decision notice.

Comments should be sent to Anne Tews, MFWP, P.O. Box 938, Lewistown, MT 59457 or antews@mt.gov.

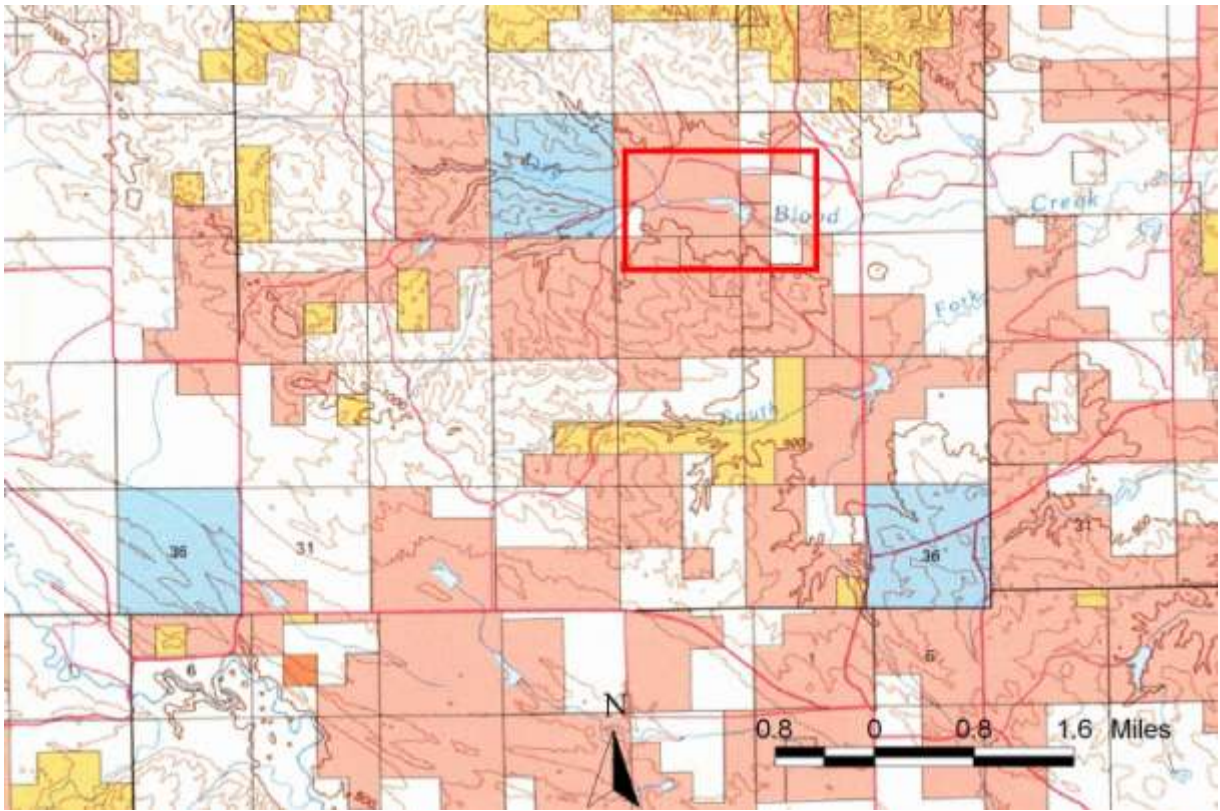


Figure 1. Location of Dry Blood Pond pond. Red box indicates location of pond about 16 miles North of Winnett, MT at T21N R18E S20 or 47.22847°; 108.337737°. Aerial photo shows newly constructed dam in 2009 prior to reservoir fill.